

H STREET NE
STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

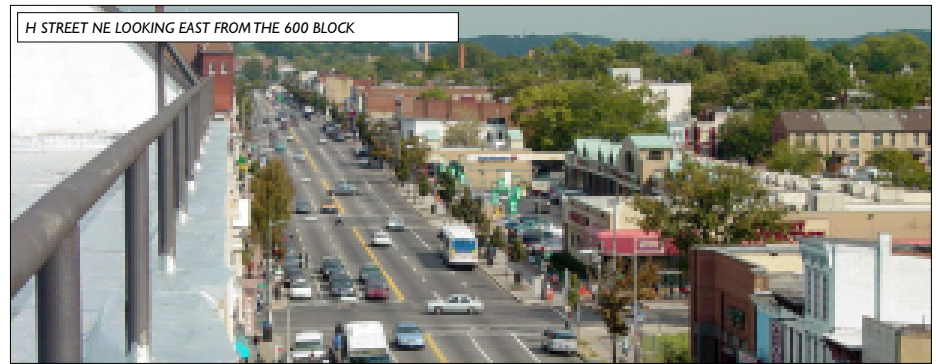
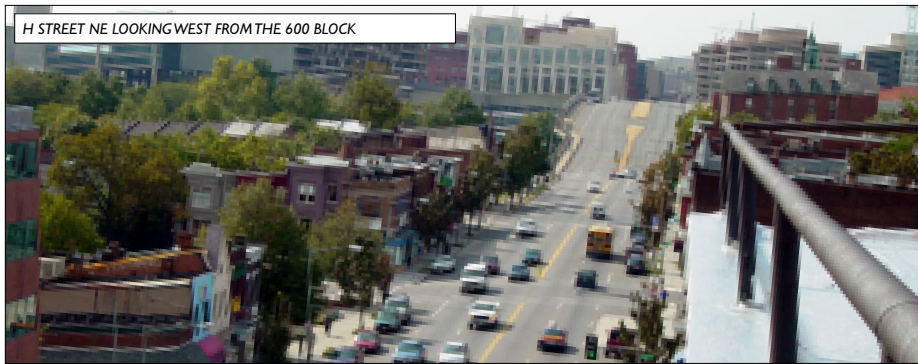


**STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN
DRAFT**

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Prepared for:
Government of the District of Columbia
Office of Planning

Prepared by:
HOK



1 PROJECT OVERVIEW

This section of the plan offers background information on the planning effort; a summary of community-defined goals, objectives, and issues; a description of the study area; and an overview of the planning process.

1.1 A Top Priority

The H Street NE Strategic Development Plan is a direct outgrowth of the Neighborhood Planning Initiative of the District's Neighborhood Action program. Through the planning process, area residents identified as a top priority H Street's transformation into a vibrant commercial corridor. As reflected in the neighborhood's Strategic Neighborhood Action Plan (Cluster 25), residents and area stakeholders believe that a healthy and viable neighborhood requires healthy and vibrant economic opportunities. Through a carefully facilitated process of issue identification and priority setting, residents, stakeholders, business owners, and institutional neighbors from across the area pointed to the revitalization of H Street as a top concern. In addition to infrastructure improvements, increased safety, beautification efforts, and financial assistance, residents advocated for more economic opportunities including improvements in physical appearance, safety and social health.

1.2 Plan Goals & Objectives

The Strategic Development Plan has been prepared to help reestablish H Street as a safe, attractive destination offering a unique combination of neighborhood goods and services;

places to live, work, shop, and eat; and settings for cultural enrichment and entertainment.

As a guide for public and private investment, the Strategic Development Plan is designed to:

- provide vital information and recommendations to help existing businesses to grow and thrive on H Street ;
- offer strategies for encouraging the reuse of the numerous vacant lots and storefronts to create a desirable mix of commercial offerings on the corridor;
- assist in determining the public investment needed to improve the infrastructure and physical appearance of the corridor; and
- identify ways to improve the physical and market perception of the corridor to attract shoppers, tourists, residents, visitors, and private investors.

Plan recommendations and strategies focus on helping achieve the following interrelated objectives:

- retention of existing businesses and attraction of new businesses to support more diverse offerings of goods and services, growth in job opportunities for area residents, and increased tax revenues to support local services;
- attraction of new residents, visitors and customers while protecting surrounding neighborhoods and balancing needs for pedestrians, vehicular traffic flow and parking; and

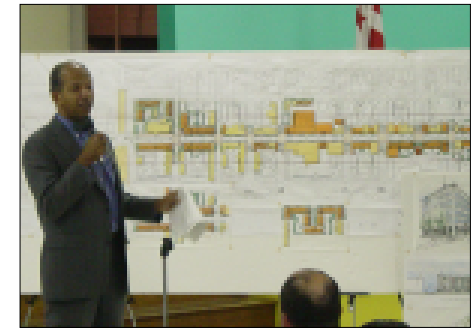
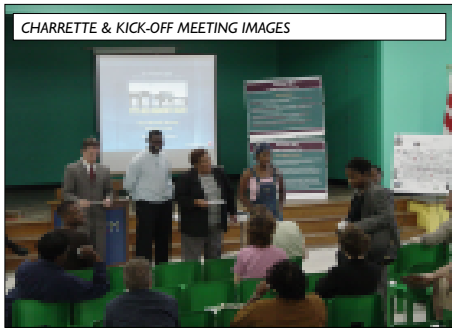
- creation of a strong sense of place that respects the corridor's rich architectural and social history through streetscape improvements, the preservation and adaptive reuse of existing buildings and the construction of new buildings compatible with the corridor's existing character and contemporary business requirements.

1.3 Key Community Issues

As a first step in the planning process for H Street , the Office of Planning worked with community groups and area stakeholders to form an Advisory Committee. Among the Committee's first tasks was the identification of issues and opportunities important to the community. These issues, summarized below, served as a starting point for the development of the plan:

Land Use, Zoning & Development

- Potential redevelopment, repositioning opportunities at both of the gateway locations, the Hechinger Mall area at the eastern gateway and the 3rd and H intersection at the western gateway;
- Recommendations for site assemblage (to accommodate new uses), demolition and historic preservation;
- Recommendations for new land uses and/or zoning modifications;
- Building design and development guidelines for new construction and preservation properties; and
- Role of housing incentives and benefits of housing.



CHARRETTE & KICK-OFF MEETING IMAGES

Transit, Traffic & Parking

- Recommendations for parking and traffic/transportation management;
- Assess impact of light rail transit on corridor on parking, land uses and zoning; and
- Pedestrian safety / sidewalk conditions & uses.

Retail Environment

- Diversification of the retail mix;
- Strategies for marketing the corridor to new retail users;
- Strategies for encouraging revitalization activities along the corridor; i.e. tax increment financing district, HUB and Enterprise zone benefits, etc.;
- Strategies for capacity building of corridor merchants and property owners, i.e. Business Improvement Districts (BID) or others; and
- Small business incubators, cultivation of local entrepreneurs.

Public Realm

- Guidelines for streetscapes;
- Safety;
- Place making strategies; and
- Public gathering places (i.e. sidewalk cafés, particularly side streets).

1.4 Study Area

The focus area for the H Street NE Strategic Development Plan includes the commercially-zoned land and buildings fronting H Street between 2nd Street NE and 15th Street NE as well as the Hechinger's Mall site (Square 4493) and the CVS/Old Sears site (Square 4491). A larger area, referred to as the project area, extends west to North Capitol, east to 17th Street NE, north to K Street NE, and south to F Street NE.

1.5 Planning Process

The process for the Strategic Development Plan was organized around a series of Advisory Committee work sessions, public workshops, and an interactive design charrette. In addition, Office of Planning staff provided progress reports to stakeholder groups and organizations and solicited feedback during numerous community meetings.

Advisory Committee Formation

To represent the interests of a broad cross-section of area stakeholders, a community-based Advisory Committee was formed to guide the planning effort. Members of the committee included residents and business owners, representatives of neighborhood and civic associations, Advisory Neighborhood Commission leaders, and representatives from H Street business associations and area cultural institutions. Advisory Committee meetings were led by the Office of Planning and typically held prior

to the broader community workshops. The Advisory Committee served both as a conduit for information dissemination and a sounding board for ideas and proposals.

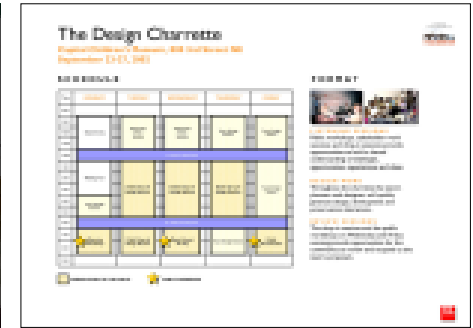
Inventory & Initial Public Workshop

Prior to the initial community meeting, the design team completed a review and analysis of physical conditions along the H Street corridor. The inventory relied on data provided by the Office of Planning—tax assessor records, GIS data, development policies and regulations—as well as information collected through a series of field surveys and stakeholder interviews. Through the field surveys and interviews, the design team collected information regarding the condition and occupancy of buildings and the quality of public spaces and rights-of-way. This information provided the basis for the identification of development, preservation, parking, and public space improvement opportunities.

On September 12, 2002, the Office of Planning and the Advisory Committee held the first public workshop. The workshop was designed to introduce neighborhood stakeholders to the study, review the study goals and objectives, present the design team's preliminary findings, and solicit feedback on issues and ideas for the corridor. Following an introduction by members of the Advisory Committee and presentations by Office of Planning staff and members of the design team, workshop participants shared observations about existing conditions and ideas for positive change.



CHARRETTE & KICK-OFF MEETING IMAGES



Design Charrette

During the next stage of the process, the design team led the community through a week-long design charrette at the Capitol Children's Museum. From September 23-27, 2002, members of the team worked with community stakeholders to develop and test ideas and identify potential solutions to H Street's planning and development challenges.

In recent years, charrettes have gained popularity as effective platforms for collaboration and community problem-solving. As with the H Street Charrette, typically events are organized around the following kinds of public activities:

- **Listening Sessions.** Public workshops, stakeholder work sessions, and drop-in sessions provide opportunities to build a shared understanding of challenges, opportunities, expectations and ideas.
- **Design Workshops.** During a charrette, planners and designers quickly generate design ideas and development alternatives, responding to ideas and information gained through the listening sessions.
- **Review Sessions.** Drop-in sessions, walking tours, briefings, and public workshops provide opportunities for the community to review and respond to ideas and proposals.

The openness of a charrette allows input and feedback from parties that have a stake in the plan, intimate knowledge of the place and its people, and the ability to support implementation. The active engagement of

community members, public officials, property owners, and local merchants is a prerequisite to success. The H Street Charrette allowed easy access during the drop-in sessions, workshops and formal presentations. Throughout the week, residents, property owners and merchants stopped to check on the team's progress, share ideas and concerns, and real time feedback on design and proposals.

To begin the event, members of the Advisory Committee led the design team in a walking tour of the corridor. The tour was followed by a well-attended public workshop held at the Capitol Children's Museum the evening of September 23, 2002. That evening the team reviewed the analysis of existing conditions and initial design and development concepts, and led a series of small group discussion sessions. This was an opportunity for members of the planning team to introduce the study and share initial observations concerning H Street's assets and issues and hear community concerns, ideas and visions for the corridor's future.

During the next two days of the charrette the team began the design process and simultaneously held meetings with a variety of stakeholders, including merchants, residents, and property owners. The intense process allowed the information received during the meetings to be fed directly to the design team and incorporated into the design effort.

The charrette concluded with a large-scale public workshop during which Mayor Anthony Williams offered a summary of the District's on-going work in the neighborhood and

members of the design team presented the outcome of the design effort and led a question-and-answer session with attendees.

Following the charrette the design team worked closely with the Office of Planning to develop the recommendations contained in Strategic Development Plan. The Office of Planning continued to provide the design team with community input obtained from various meetings, emails and other communications. In addition, approximately ten more public presentations were held to update the community and receive their comments on the plan's preliminary recommendations

Final Public Workshops & Community Meetings

[to be prepared]

Plan Finalization & Endorsement

[to be prepared]